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FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE  
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 297976

E.O. 12958: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: PTER PREL RU TU  
SUBJECT: STATUS OF PKK PRESENCE IN RUSSIA

REFS: A) ANKARA 13507 (BEING REPEATED TO MOSCOW); B)  
ANKARA 13634 (BEING REPEATED TO MOSCOW); C) ANKARA 2965;  
D) TD 315/00535-94; E) TD 315/50753-94

¶11. (C) SUMMARY: TURKISH PRESS REPORTS THE PKK HAS SPONSORED ANOTHER MOSCOW CONFERENCE ON KURDISH SEPARATISM. DEPARTMENT WOULD BE CONCERNED WERE MOSCOW TO BECOME A CENTER OF OPERATIONAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY FOR PKK TERRORISM. PLEASE PROVIDE AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON THE CONFERENCE (ESPECIALLY ANY RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT OR FACILITATION) AND ANY READILY AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON ACTIVITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE PKK AND PRO-PKK FRONTS IN RUSSIA. DEPARTMENT ALSO INVITES RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE APPROPRIATENESS AND TACTICS OF A POSSIBLE DEMARCHE TO MOSCOW LAYING DOWN A MARKER ON OUR CONCERNS. END SUMMARY.

¶12. (U) REF A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY (BEING REPEATED TO MOSCOW) NOTED TURKISH PRESS REPORTS THAT ON OCTOBER 29 -KURDISH SEPARATISTS FROM TURKEY STARTED A THREE-DAY MEETING IN MOSCOW AIMED AT UNITING AND STRENGTHENING THE KURDISH MOVEMENT WITHIN THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES. THE MEETING, SPONSORED BY THE PKK (KURDISTAN WORKERS' PARTY), IS PART OF A CAMPAIGN IN THE FORMER EAST BLOC. THE CONFERENCE WAS CLOSED TO TURKISH JOURNALISTS.- REF B PRESS SUMMARY QUOTED TURKISH PRESS REPORTS THAT THE CONFERENCE ENDED OCTOBER 31 HAVING ELECTED ONE YURI NEBIEV LEADER OF A -KURDISH UNION." TURKEY REPORTEDLY PROTESTED THE CONFERENCE VIA DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS. (NB: TURKEY HAS NOT ASKED THE USG FOR SUPPORT ON THIS ISSUE.)

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THE THREAT  
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¶13. (S) DEPARTMENT UNDERSTANDS THAT PRO-PKK CONFERENCES OF THIS NATURE HAVE BEEN HELD PREVIOUSLY, AND THAT THE RUSSIANS HAVE IN THE PAST ASSURED TURKEY THAT MOSCOW HAS NO INTENTION OF ESTABLISHING TIES WITH THE PKK (REF C). EXPERIENCE WITH THE PKK AND ITS FRONTS IN WESTERN EUROPE HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT THE ORGANIZATION CAN POSE A DANGER EVEN WITHOUT THE FORMAL SUPPORT OF THE HOST GOVERNMENT. DEPARTMENT WOULD BE CONCERNED WERE MOSCOW TO BECOME A CENTER OF OPERATIONAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY FOR PKK TERRORISM (E.G., WEAPONS PROCUREMENT, TRAINING) -- REPORTS OF SUCH ACTIVITY HAVE SURFACED IN THE PAST (E.G. REFS D, E) -- OR WERE THE PKK TO MOBILIZE THE SERVICES OF RUSSIAN MAFIA GROUPS.

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BACKGROUND ON THE PKK  
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¶14. (C) THE USG CONSIDERS THE PKK TO BE A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION, NOT/NOT A LEGITIMATE POLITICAL MOVEMENT. OUR SUPPORT FOR TURKISH EFFORTS TO COMBAT THE PKK IS BASED NOT ONLY ON THE THREAT IT POSES TO TURKEY, BUT IN PART ON THE GROUP'S PAST AND PRESENT ACTIONS THREATENING AMERICAN LIVES AND INTERESTS. SINCE THE 1984 START OF ITS CAMPAIGN TO CARVE A KURDISH STATE OUT OF THE TURKISH SOUTHEAST, THE PKK HAS REPEATEDLY TAKEN AMERICANS HOSTAGE AND ATTACKED US ECONOMIC TARGETS. THE PKK'S ONGOING BOMBING CAMPAIGN AIMED AT TOURIST SITES IN

TURKEY ENDANGERS AMERICAN AS WELL AS TURKISH AND PORT FORTHE PKK WAS FREQUENTLY ALLEGED.

15. (S) THE PKK'S POLITICAL WING, ERNK, MAINTAINS A PRESENCE IN A NUMBER OF EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, INCLUDING SOME WHICH BAN THE PKK. AFTER THE PKK ENGAGED IN TERRORISM IN WESTERN EUROPE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 1993, FRANCE AND GERMANY BANNED THE GROUP AND DOZENS OF ITS FRONTS. ERNK CLAIMS ITS INTERNATIONAL OFFICES ENGAGE ONLY IN ORGANIZATIONAL AND INFORMATION ACTIVITY. HOWEVER, THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT IN SOME COUNTRIES ERNK OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN OPERATIONAL TERRORIST SUPPORT ACTIVITY. DEPARTMENT SEEKS TO DISCOURAGE GOVERNMENTS FROM DRAWING A FACILE DISTINCTION BETWEEN "TERRORIST- PKK AND "POLITICAL" ERNK.

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ACTION REQUESTED  
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16. (C) AT THIS STAGE, THE DEPARTMENT WOULD LIKE TO REVIEW THE LATEST READILY-AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON PKK-RELATED ACTIVITY IN RUSSIA, WITH AN EYE TOWARD A POSSIBLE DEMARCHE TO MOSCOW DETAILING OUR CONCERNS ABOUT THE PKK AND ITS FRONTS. PLEASE REPORT ON THE NATURE, SCOPE, AND PARTICIPANTS OF THE CONFERENCE CITED IN REFS A AND B, WITH PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO ANY RUSSIAN GOVERNMENTAL INVOLVEMENT OR FACILITATION. (WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY DETAILS THE TURKISH EMBASSY IN MOSCOW MAY HAVE.) MORE BROADLY, DEPARTMENT WOULD BE INTERESTED IN ANY INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO EMBASSY ON ACTIVITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE PKK, ERNK, OR OTHER PRO-PKK SUPPORT OR FRONT ORGANIZATIONS IN RUSSIA.

17. (C) DEPARTMENT ALSO INVITES POST'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE APPROPRIATENESS AND TACTICS OF A DEMARCHE TO MOSCOW LAYING DOWN A MARKER ON THE PKK. AT THIS STAGE EMBASSY SHOULD NOT/NOT APPROACH HOST GOVERNMENT FOR INFORMATION. SLUG REPLY FOR S/CT (KOSNETT) AND ISCA.

CHRISTOPHER